

Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers April 19, 2004

NETS FEATURES

9th Annual Michigan Traffic Safety Summit- April 27-28, 2004, Lansing, MI. (last chance to register)

This annual event brings together federal, state and local partners to learn about emerging traffic safety trends, share innovative programs and become informed about new technology to assist in reducing traffic deaths and injuries in Michigan. Join us! Registration forms for participants are available online at http://www.michigan.gov/msp/0,1607,7-123-1593_3504-90086--,00.html

The site includes hotel information, the program agenda and a conference registration form. You can fill in the form online; however, you must print the form and fax or mail it to the Office of Highway Safety Planning to register. No online registration is available. Featured speaker, retired Mississippi Highway Patrol Captain Pete Collins has traveled more than nine million miles and spoken to more than 17 million people worldwide on a variety of subjects. He did not set out to become an award-winning speaker. He was just a Mississippi Highway Patrol trooper who felt compelled to tell anyone who would listen of his experience as a highway patrol officer. What started as an overwhelming desire to share what he had seen in hopes of saving lives has turned out to be a full-time job.

Latest Traffic Safety News

NIOSH Announces Several New Road Safety Resources

April 7, 2004 was World Health Day (WHD), which marks the beginning of a year-long global road safety campaign. In observance of WHD, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) announced several new road safety resources including:

- Two new fact sheets: "Work-related roadway crashes: prevention strategies for employers;" and "Work-related roadway crashes: who's at risk?" Both fact sheets are available in English and Spanish.
- An article entitled "Work-related roadway crashes -- United States, 1992-2002," published April 2, 2004 in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR).
- A comprehensive Hazard Review on occupational road safety: "Work-related roadway crashes: challenges and opportunities for prevention."
- Specialized information on roadway safety for emergency responders and highway workers.

To access these materials, please visit the NIOSH motor vehicle topic page at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/injury/traumamv.html>.

Study Tests the Effectiveness of ESC

Using the National Advanced Driving Simulator (NADS), researchers from the University of Iowa have documented the effectiveness of Electronic Stability Control (ESC) in preventing crashes. Owned by NHTSA and operated by the University of Iowa, the simulator enabled researchers to study drivers during "true-to-life critical driving scenarios" that could lead to loss of vehicle control. The study determined that 34 percent more drivers maintain control of their vehicles with ESC than without. In addition, these studies showed that ESC could prevent 15 percent of all types of crashes and 30 to 35 percent of single-vehicle crashes. For more information on ESC visit, <http://www.esceducation.org>



GM to Begin Installing Vehicle Stability Systems in 12-Passenger Vans

General Motors (GM) announced it will begin installing vehicle stability enhancement systems in GMC Savana and Chevrolet Express 3500 135-inch regular wheelbase 12-passenger vans in the interim 2005 model year production cycle. Vehicle stability enhancement systems (VSES) help drivers maintain control of vehicles during certain difficult driving conditions. GM began installing VSES in passenger cars in 1997, and now have more than 2 million vehicles on the road equipped with some sort of vehicle stability enhancement system. For more information, the GM press release is available on the company website at

<http://media.gm.com/servlet/GatewayServlet?target=http://image.emerald.gm.com/gmnews/viewmonthlyreleasedetail.do?domain=74&docid=2830>.

Poll: Americans Support Funding for Highway Safety Improvements

A recent national poll conducted by the State Highway Traffic Safety Alliance (SHTSA) and Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company revealed that an overwhelming 87 percent of the American public supports funding for highway traffic safety improvements. This study's findings come at a critical time as Congress debates legislation that will fund highway and transit programs nationwide in coming years. SHTSA members believe that the public's strong support underscores the urgent need for Congress to agree on and pass the six-year transportation bill. For a full article

http://vocuspr.vocus.com/vocuspr30/publish/vcsPRAsset_588_79331_%7B549FB318-2ABE-4A67-AEA4-B44AE3CDD888%7D_RELEASE_Auto_Pricing_03.16.04_NATIONAL.doc.

Rental Car Companies Keeping Tabs Through GPS

Some rental car companies keep tabs on their renters, tracking the renters' speed and handing out fines for going over the speed limit. Other companies charge a fixed fee for driving the car out of state. The Global Positioning System (GPS) installed in some vehicles provides rental car companies with this information and printouts of customers' exact routes. While travelers may feel that this is an invasion of privacy, rental car companies say it's all there in the fine print. According to analysts, about one-fourth of the rental cars in the United States come equipped with a GPS or some similar tracking device. Payless Car Rental and Acme Rent-a-Car have received several complaints from renters, and many upset customers have tried to battle privacy issues in court. Two major rental car companies, Hertz and Avis, state that they are not interested in tracking such things as customers' speed. These companies use GPS technology but say their systems do not have the ability to track speed. Hertz and Avis use GPS to better accommodate travelers' needs, supplying directions, unlocking cars via satellite when keys are misplaced and notifying authorities when there is an accident.

New Frontal Offset Crash Test Results from IIHS

In 40 mph frontal offset crash tests conducted recently by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), five of six new or redesigned midsize cars earned good ratings: Acura TL, Acura TSX, Nissan Maxima, Chevrolet Malibu, and Mitsubishi Galant. Both Acuras and the Maxima also earned "best pick" designations in the frontal test. The only car tested that didn't earn a good rating was the Suzuki Verona, which is rated acceptable. The Institute has tested previous designs of the Galant, Maxima, and Malibu. In each case the performance of the new model improved. For more information, visit the IIHS website at http://www.highwaysafety.org/news_releases/2004/pr032104.htm.

In-Car Systems that Monitor Driver Distractions

In-car systems that monitor driver activity, and then screen out unwelcome technological distractions such as phone calls, could improve road safety. Recognizing the potential hazards associated with information overload, carmakers are taking matters into their own hands. Their technological solution is to add yet another device to the dashboard, to eliminate the driver's responsibility for deciding when it is too dangerous to use a communications device. The carmakers' idea is to monitor the driver's



activity via the steering wheel, pedals, and indicators (turn signals) to assess the complexity of the current maneuver using a set of predefined rules. If this complexity exceeds a certain threshold, the system filters out unnecessary distractions, diverting phone calls to voice mail, or silencing traffic updates. To view the new systems being produced visit http://www.economist.com/research/articlesBySubject/displayStory.cfm?story_id=2476860&subjectID=348990&emailauth=%2527%2528P%252E0%2521%253C%253D%2523%2520ZD%250A.

How to Evaluate Safety and Health Changes in the Workplace

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has released a guidebook, which includes case studies illustrating the collaborative effort of employers and workers to evaluate occupational safety and health changes in the workplace. It also describes the necessary steps to conduct an evaluation of these changes and provides a list of additional resources. To view the guidebook, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2004-135/>.

Reference Guide to Basic Transportation Data Questions

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) has published the 2004 Pocket Guide to Transportation - a 50-page reference guide to basic transportation data questions. The seventh annual Pocket Guide covers data on the transportation system, transportation safety and security, mobility, and transportation's impact on the economy. To order a copy of the 2004 Pocket Guide to Transportation, contact BTS by phone at 202-366-DATA, by fax at 202-366-3197, by e-mail at orders@bts.gov, or by mail sent to Product Orders, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, USDOT, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Room 7412, Washington, DC 20590. This free guide can also be obtained by going to the BTS website at http://www.bts.gov/publications/pocket_guide_to_transportation/2004/.

Drowsy Driving is a Major Problem in the US and Abroad

Next to alcohol, speeding and driver inattention, driver fatigue or falling asleep while driving is recognized as among the most important causes of road crashes in the US and abroad, according to some experts. The Public Road Administration in Norway recently conducted a campaign to increase drivers' knowledge about this issue, and they found sleepiness and falling asleep behind the wheel is a widespread phenomenon. The study concluded: "In spite of the drivers' knowledge of the risk of falling asleep and of the effective countermeasures, most of them continue driving when recognizing sleepiness while behind the wheel." The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety made the study available on its website at <http://www.aaafoundation.org/home/>. For tips on prevention of drowsy driving and to find additional research and resources, go to www.DrowsyDriving.org.

First Lane Departure Warning System Offered in Vehicle This Fall

The first Lane Departure Warning (LDW) system in North America will be offered this fall by Nissan North America on 2005 FX sport-utility vehicles. LDW utilizes a camera, speed sensor, indicator, and an audible warning buzzer to alert a driver that the vehicle is moving out of its designated lane. LDW sounds a warning when the vehicle begins to drift out of a lane, except if the driver activates the turn signal or manually turns off the system. For more information, visit http://biz.yahoo.com/prnews/040331/law047_1.html.

Conference to Discuss Impact of Long Work Hours on Occupational Safety

"Long Working Hours, Safety, and Health: Toward a National Research Agenda"

is a national conference sponsored by the University of Maryland School of Nursing, NIOSH, and the U.S. Department of Justice and will be held April 29-30, 2004. Attendees will have the opportunity to participate in creating a cutting edge research agenda that promises to guide the work in this field for years to come. Using a multi-disciplinary approach, participants will explore the sociological,

economic, and health dimensions of long work hours. The goal of the conference is to understand the impact that long working hours are having on occupational safety, health, and well-being and to learn about current and emerging interventions in this field. For more information, visit <http://nursing.umaryland.edu/longworkhours/index.htm>.

New Report Released on Pedestrian Safety

The University of North Carolina's Highway Safety Research Center has released a report that examines studies on pedestrian safety in the United States and abroad. The report includes information on pedestrian crash characteristics, measures of pedestrian exposure and hazard, and specific roadway features and their effects on pedestrian safety. For more information, visit http://www.walkinginfo.org/pdf/PedSynth/Ped_Synthesis_Report.pdf.

Transportation Engineers Try to Keep Traffic Flowing

A fleet of vehicles equipped with computers and GPS units is helping transportation engineers understand how to keep traffic flowing – even in rush hour, reports IEEE Spectrum Online. Randall Guensler, a professor of civil and environmental engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, wants to eliminate the congestion that clogs the city's metropolitan area. To better understand how such traffic knots form, he and a team of transportation engineers have "bugged" 500 vehicles with GPS-enabled monitoring devices that transmit data to a central server at Georgia Tech. This traffic monitoring campaign represents a major advance in traffic analysis, gathering comprehensive data about traffic patterns and driver behavior. For the full article, visit <http://www.spectrum.ieee.org/WEBONLY/wonews/apr04/0404cars.html>.

National Transportation Week 2004 is May 16-22

This year's National Transportation Week will be held on May 16-22, 2004 and will give Americans the opportunity to celebrate the benefits of transportation, as well as explore its future challenges. In support of this celebration, 5th grade students are encouraged to enter this year's National Transportation Week poster contest. Posters will be judged on a simple, clear interpretation of "One Nation on the Move." Submissions are due April 12, 2004. For more information, visit <http://www.ntweek.org/posters/default.htm>.

MADD Calls for Tougher Child Endangerment Laws

In response to a new study showing that hundreds of children die each year while riding with impaired drivers, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) is calling for tougher child endangerment laws; stricter enforcement by police and prosecutors; and improved training and awareness for judges, attorneys, law enforcement, and family services. Entitled, Child Endangerment Report: Every Child Deserves a Designated Driver, MADD makes several recommendations, including a call for states to:

- Adopt primary seat belt laws
- Consider adding provisions for points to driver's license records for violations
- Require alcohol ignition interlock devices on vehicles used by child endangerment offenders

For more information, visit MADD's website at <http://www.madd.org/news/0,1056,7985,00.html>. To view the report, visit http://www.madd.org/docs/CE_Report_Final.pdf.

New State Transportation Statistics and Analyses

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics' (BTS) Transportation Statistics Annual Report: October 2003 reviews the state of transportation statistics and analyzes the impacts of the transportation system on people, the economy, energy use, and the environment. To view the report, visit http://www.bts.gov/publications/transportation_statistics_annual_report/2003/pdf/entire.pdf.



Satellite Radio Provider Now Offers Weather and Traffic

SIRIUS Satellite Radio, a provider of free music and sports programming for cars and homes across the country, announced SIRIUS FIRST TRAFFIC, a nationwide traffic reporting system that uses local, on-the-scene reporters, expanded its service to 20 markets. On March 29, traffic and weather for Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco-San Jose, Boston, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Washington, DC, Atlanta, Detroit, Houston, Seattle, Tampa-St. Petersburg, Phoenix, Miami-Ft. Lauderdale, Orlando, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Baltimore, and San Diego joined New York and Los Angeles in the SIRIUS lineup. Subscribers in these areas are within minutes of their market-specific traffic and weather report. SIRIUS FIRST TRAFFIC broadcasts traffic conditions from operations centers located around the country and has access to a fleet of helicopters, fixed-wing aircraft, ground monitors, traffic cameras, and other technologies. Reports for these markets are available nationwide to all SIRIUS subscribers via the SIRIUS satellite broadcasting system. For more information, visit http://www.softcom.net/webnews/wed/dm/Uus-sirius.Rk9v_EFS.html.

Ford Announces New Results in Drowsy Driving Study

Drowsiness accounts for more than 1,500 auto-related deaths per year in the US, according to a report by NHTSA. To prevent this problem, Ford Motor Company conducted a comprehensive five-month study, and as a result has announced new technology designed to keep drowsy drivers awake. The study is the most complete controlled laboratory research ever conducted on the difficult problem of drowsiness behind the wheel. Subjects were required to stay up all night and were not allowed to drink caffeine after 6:00 p.m. the night before. The sleep-deprived drivers were then sent on a three-hour drive — not behind the wheel of a car — but behind the wheel of Ford's VIRTTEX driver simulator. For more information, visit <http://www.usatoday.com/money/graphics/virttex/flash.htm> or <http://www.ford.com/en/innovation/safety/driverDistractionLab.htm>.

New From US DOT

Lawsuit Claims Important Auto Safety Data was Wrongfully Blocked

The Center for Auto Safety and Public Citizen is challenging a 2003 Transportation Department regulation that restricts Freedom of Information Act requests for some auto industry documents held by the government. As part of landmark auto safety legislation prompted by the Firestone tire debacle, Congress ordered the industry in 2000 to regularly turn over safety data to NHTSA. This would give regulators, who did not pick up on the Firestone tire and rollover problems until they became the subject of lawsuits and media reports, a much better chance of identifying defect trends early. However, last July the U.S. Dept. of Transportation approved a rule permitting it to withhold data on warranty claims, child restraint systems, some consumer complaints, and tire and auto dealer reports. They argued that confidentiality was necessary to prevent “substantial competitive harm” to manufacturers. But Public Citizen said the government did not prove that releasing the data would hurt the industry. For more information visit <http://citizen.org/pressroom/release.cfm?ID=1670>. To view the specifics of the complaint, visit <http://www.citizen.org/documents/ACF13F3.pdf>.

New Plan to Cut Traffic Deaths by a Third

Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta is pushing an ambitious plan to cut the rate of traffic deaths by a third over the next four years. If successful, the program could save as many as 13,000 lives a year and result in the lowest number of annual deaths since records have been kept. The emphasis on safety comes as annual traffic deaths have seen an increase since 1992—a reversal of the steady downward trend during the 1970s and 1980s.



Guide for Combating Underage Drinking and Driving

NHTSA and the Department of Education recently released "Safe Lanes On Campus, a guide for combating underage drinking and driving. This manual is a response to requests from college and university officials for guidance in preventing two of the most serious problems related to student alcohol consumption: driving under the influence and alcohol use by students under the legal drinking age. This broad-based and comprehensive guide calls on the collaborative efforts of academic leaders, law enforcement agencies, community leaders, businesses, and students to plan and implement prevention programs on campus. For more information visit <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/alcohol/safeLanes/SafeLanes.pdf>.

NHTSA Releases Tire Ratings

NHTSA has released ratings for the most popular passenger vehicle tires. The rating system measures three tire performance areas: temperature, traction, and tread wear. A complete list can be found at <http://www.safercars.gov>

Information on Driving with Arthritis

NHTSA has developed a brochure on driving with arthritis. Having arthritis can make your joints swollen and stiff, which can limit how far you can bend or move your shoulders, hands, head, and neck. These common symptoms of arthritis can make it harder to grasp or turn the steering wheel, apply the brakes and gas pedals, put on a seat belt or look over the shoulder to check blind spots. To view the NHTSA brochure visit <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/olddrive/arthritis/Arthritis.pdf>.

DOT Awards \$36.4 Million to 47 states for Seat Belt Initiatives

The Department of Transportation just awarded \$36.4 million to 47 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico for the development of innovative projects to increase seat belt use. The grant program seeks to encourage new approaches to increase belt use, but the major focus is on high-visibility enforcement coupled with public information and education. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in 2003 seat belt use rose to 79 percent, due in part to high-visibility enforcement programs funded by the agency. For more information, view the NHTSA Press Release at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/nhtsa/announce/press/pressdisplay.cfm?year=2004&filename=pr13-04.html>.

FMCSA Announces Final Rule to Help Motor Carriers Hire Drivers With Best Driving Record

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) announced a final rule recently to help motor carriers hire truck and bus drivers with the best possible safety records. The rule requires employers to review candidates' professional driving safety records and requires former employers to make that information available to prospective employers. For more information, visit the FMCSA website at http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/contactus/press/2004/033104_2.htm.

FMCSA Announces the First-ever Minimum Training Requirements for Operators of Double and Triple Trucks

FMCSA announced the first-ever minimum training requirements for operators of double and triple trucks, also known as longer combination vehicles (LCVs). The safety agency also established new requirements for instructors who train LCV drivers. The rule prohibits motor carriers from allowing drivers to operate an LCV double trailer or LCV triple trailer until they have the training specified in today's rulemaking, even though they have a state-issued commercial driver's license (CDL) with a double/triple trailer endorsement. To view the FMCSA press release, visit http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/contactus/press/2004/033104_1.htm.

FHWA Chief Official Likens Roads to “Offices” for Highway Workers

The nation's chief highway official, Federal Highway Administrator Mary Peters, likening roads to "offices" of highway workers, set up her office in the middle of a busy interstate interchange to demonstrate the danger to drivers, passengers and workers from unsafe driving habits in highway work zones. Work zone fatalities increased nationwide 53 percent from 1998 to 2002, according to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) data. Four out of five people killed were either drivers or passengers. Peters said a combination of government safety programs and safe-driving habits can significantly reduce the more than 52,000 injuries and fatalities that occur each year in highway work zones. To view the FHWA press release, visit <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/pressroom/fhwa0403.htm>.

International Traffic Safety News:

U.K. Foundation Calls for Re-education Schemes in Lieu of Penalty Points for Speeding

The RAC Foundation is calling on the U.K. government to introduce re-education schemes instead of penalty points for speeding. It wants the government to tackle speeding drivers by increasing speed awareness courses as an alternative to automatic penalties. The Foundation believes driver training alters drivers' perceptions more than fines. The views are part of a four-point manifesto issued by the Foundation, which also covers speed limits, speed limit signs and driver attitudes.

Online Driver Assessment Program Played Key Role in Reducing an Organization's Crash Rate

An online driver assessment program has played a key role in helping U.K. communications giant, BT, reduce its crash rate by 30% during the past four years. BT introduced the Virtual Fleet Risk Management (VFRM.net) system in a bid to reduce accident rates. About 20,000 of BT's 70,000 employees are completing the training, which identifies high-risk drivers so they can be helped to reduce the likelihood of crashing while on the road. The study found that 5% of a sample of drivers who had taken the test was responsible for 45% of the crashes. It also found that drivers with the worst scores in the online assessment were at least three times more at risk than those with the best scores.

Help Being Sought By U.K. Employers Switching from Company Cars to Car Allowances

An increasing number of U.K. employers who have switched from company cars to cash allowances are seeking professional help as many of their drivers are buying cars unfit for business use. Provecta Car Plan, which provides alternatives to the company car, said it was handling a surge of inquiries from concerned directors who feared their policy no longer protected them against proposals for corporate manslaughter legislation. Fleet executives are now realizing that their cash allowance schemes lack the necessary controls to ensure vehicles being used for business are properly maintained and insured, or even the right vehicle for the job. Some companies have tried to protect themselves by having driver's sign a disclaimer to say they have suitable insurance and MOT records. Under proposed U.K. Government legislation, employers' liability will be extended to include manslaughter charges if deaths are caused by 'management failure'. In the case of accidents involving company cars, this will include cars found not to be 'fit for purpose', poorly maintained, or inadequately insured.

U.K. Fleet Operators Call for New Safety Measures

Two-thirds of U.K. fleet operators have called for legislation to force them to introduce new safety measures, despite revealing gaping holes in their current risk management policies. The safety call was made in an exclusive Fleet News health and safety survey, sponsored by Nissan, which reveals whether or not fleets are currently meeting their duty of care requirements to drivers. A total of 64.2% of fleets said they would welcome more laws forcing the industry to take action to improve driver safety. Yet many fleets in the survey admitted their own safety policies were at fault. A full copy of the report is available by emailing fleetnews@emap.com.